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Remarks

Claims 21, 22, 24 through 26, 28 through 36 and 38 through 41 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Roberts et. al. ('688) in view Japanese reference 10-286122. Claims 23, 27 and 37 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In responding to these rejections, the Applicant has amended Independent claims 21 and 34. The amendments now specify the co-extruded intermediate layer to be plastically deformable in liquid or viscous phase. With regard to method claim 21, the intermediate step of withdrawing the co-extruded core has been deleted and the continuous material is applied onto the plastically deformable Intermediate layer. The article of manufacture of claim 34 has also been amended accordingly. Both independent claims 21 and 34 now explicitly recite a three layer structure.

Referring to '688, this reference (see Fig. 4 and associated discussion) discloses a bristle having a core and an outer jacket. No statement is made in the '688 reference concerning a three layer structure. Nor does '688 indicate that the jacket is in a liquid or viscous phase. With regard to JP 10-286122, this reference discloses a bristle having an internal wire. This reference does not envision a three layer structure. The wire according to JP '122 has the effect of stiffening the bristle and the cover (of continuous material) is intended to influence the brushing action of

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the bristle. JP '122 does not indicate how the stiffening wire is introduced into the bristle.

The independent method and article of manufacture claims recite a three layer structure having a co-extruded intermediate layer in liquid or viscous phase. Neither one of these features is disclosed in the prior art of record. Nor does that prior art of record provide motivation for the three layer structure as recited. The Applicant therefore believes that the claims are sufficiently distinguished from the prior art of record to satisfy the conditions for patenting in the United States. The dependent claims of record inherit the limitations of the base claims and are therefore equally patentable. Passage to issuance is therefore requested.

No new matter has been added in this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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